

In re Patent Application of:
PEZZINI
Serial No. 10/727,147
Filing Date: **DECEMBER 3, 2003**

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of the present application. Applicant would also like to thank the Examiner for correctly indicating as allowable the subject matter of dependent Claims 20-21, 27-28, 32-33 and 36-37.

The independent claims have been amended to more clearly define the present invention over the cited prior art references. Support in the specification for the claim amendments may be found in paragraphs 13 and 27, for example. Claim 17 has been amended to correct a noted informality. The claim amendments and arguments supporting patentability of the claims are provided below.

I. The Amended Claims

The present invention, as recited in amended independent Claim 15, for example, is directed to a computer system comprising at least one peripheral for generating interrupt requests, an interrupt pending register for storing the interrupt requests, and a microprocessor for processing interrupts. An interrupt control circuit is coupled to the interrupt pending register and the microprocessor for providing an interrupt command to the microprocessor based upon the stored interrupt requests. AN auxiliary interrupt control circuit is coupled to the at least one peripheral and the microprocessor for generating a bit string identifying an active bit stored in the interrupt pending register corresponding to a highest priority interrupt request to be processed and providing the bit string to the microprocessor. The microprocessor identifies and processes

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an interrupt corresponding to the highest priority interrupt request based upon the bit string and the interrupt command without having to read the interrupt pending register.

Identification of the interrupt to be served is significantly less burdensome on the microprocessor that executes the corresponding routine. This is done by generating in the peripheral a bit string identifying, by a corresponding active bit of the string, the interrupt to be served, and sending this bit string to the microprocessor that will recognize the interrupt and eventually serve it by executing the corresponding routine. Moreover, by generating a bit string which identifies the position of an active bit in the interrupt pending register of the peripheral requesting the interrupt, and sending the bit-string to the processor, the processor is able to substantially immediately recognize which interrupt of the peripheral is to be served or processed - without having to read the interrupt pending register of the peripheral.

Independent Claim 23 is directed to an auxiliary interrupt control circuit for use in a computer system, and has been amended similarly to amended independent Claim 15.

Independent Claim 29 is directed to a peripheral to be coupled to a microprocessor, and has been amended similarly to amended independent Claim 15.

Independent Claim 34 is directed to a method for processing peripheral interrupts, and has been amended similarly to amended independent Claim 15.

II. The Claims Are Patentable

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 15, 23, 29

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and 34 over the Moyer et al. patent. The Moyer et al. patent is directed to a data processing system 10 that has a multi-field register 62 with two fields; a selection field 90 and an information field 91. The selection field 90 identifies the source of the information loaded in the information field 91.

The multi-field register 62 is an interrupt flag register 62 and the selection field 90 identifies which of the two register portions 59, 60 of the interrupt pending register 58 is loaded into the multi-field register 62. The low register portion 59 can identify up to thirty-one sources of interrupt requests, and the high register portion 60 can identify up to thirty-two sources of interrupt requests even though the information field 91 is only thirty-one bits. This is achievable because the selection field 90 serves a dual function, namely as a flag bit and as bit-32 of the interrupt pending register 58. Reference is directed to column 6, lines 9-13 of the Moyer et al. patent, which provides:

"Thus CPU reads the interrupt flag register 62 and uses the least significant bit 90 to determine whether the rest of the bits of interrupt flag register 62 contain information on interrupt request sources 1-31 or interrupt request sources 32-63."

The CPU in the Moyer et al. patent recognizes which interrupt is to be served or processed by reading the interrupt pending register 58 (i.e., via the dual function of the selection field 90) of the peripheral. In sharp contrast,

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amended independent Claim 15 has been amended to recite that the microprocessor identifies an interrupt corresponding to the highest priority interrupt request based upon the bit string and the interrupt command without reading the interrupt pending register, and processes the identified interrupt.

In the claimed invention, by generating a bit string which identifies the position of an active bit in the interrupt pending register of the peripheral requesting the interrupt, and sending the bit-string to the microprocessor, the microprocessor is able to substantially immediately recognize which interrupt of the peripheral is to be served or processed - without having to read the interrupt pending register of the peripheral. The Moyer et al. patent fails to teach or fairly suggest these features of the claimed invention.

Accordingly, it is submitted that amended independent Claim 15 is patentable over the Moyer et al. patent. Amended independent Claims 23, 29 and 34 are similar to amended independent Claim 15. Therefore, it is submitted that these claims are also patentable over the Moyer et al. patent.

In view of the patentability of amended independent Claims 15, 23, 29 and 34, it is submitted that the dependent claims, which include yet further distinguishing features of the invention are also patentable. These dependent claims need no further discussion herein.

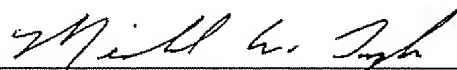
III. CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments to the claims and the arguments provided herein, it is submitted that all the claims

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are patentable. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is requested in due course. Should any minor informalities need to be addressed, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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